

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 037574 TOSEC 030081

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SISCO

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, SS, MARR, MNUC, MO

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM -- VISIT TO MOROCCO OF U.S.
NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINE (S/S 7603250)

THE PROBLEM

A VISIT BY U.S. NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINE, BERGALL, TO SOUTH CENTRAL MOROCCAN PORT OF SAFI IS SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 27 TO MARCH 1. THIS WOULD BE FIRST VISIT BY A U.S. NUCLEAR-POWERED WARSHIP (NPW) TO A MOROCCAN PORT AND COULD ATTRACT UNUSUAL ATTENTION AS IT WOULD COINCIDE WITH FEBRUARY 28 TRANSFER OF SPANISH JURIDICAL AUTHORITY IN SAHARA, A TIME WHEN MOROCCO WILL BE THE FOCUS OF CONSIDERABLE DIPLOMATIC AND PRESS ACTIVITY. WE NEED TO WEIGH PROS AND CONS OF ALLOWING VISIT TO PROCEED ON SCHEDULE AND, IF VISIT GOES FORWARD, WE NEED ALSO TO CONSIDER ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF THOSE ARAB NATIONS, PARTICULARLY EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND SYRIA, WHICH HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO BRING ABOUT SOLUTION TO SAHARA PROBLEM, AND ALGERIA IN

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ORDER TO DEFUSE BOUMEDIENNE'S ADVERSE REACTION TO THE

EXTENT POSSIBLE.

BACKGROUND

1. AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF GOM INDECISION, AND FOLLOWING

DIRECT REQUEST BY DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CLEMENTS TO MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR BOUTALEB ON DECEMBER 18, GOM, ON DECEMBER 20, GRANTED PERMISSION FOR U.S. NUCLEAR WARSHIPS TO CALL, AT OUR CONVENIENCE, IN MOROCCAN PORTS. MOROCCANS, MOST RECENTLY IN JANUARY 28 MEETING WHICH I HAD WITH AMBASSADOR BOUTALEB, URGED WE SEND NUCLEAR VESSEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS DEMONSTRATION OF U.S. SUPPORT.

2. WITH APPROVAL OF GOM NAVY HAS MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CALL FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 1. QUESTION IS WHETHER WE SHOULD ALLOW VISIT TO PROCEED OR POSTPONE IT FOR FOREIGN POLICY REASONS. MR. CLEMENTS FEELS STRONGLY THAT VISIT SHOULD GO FORWARD AS PLANNED. HE CONCERNED THAT BRIEF POSTPONEMENT MIGHT BE INDEFINITELY PROLONGED, AND THAT ENVIRONMENT FOR VISIT IS MUCH BETTER TODAY THAN IT MIGHT BE A MONTH OR SIX WEEKS AWAY.

THE OPTIONS

1. THAT YOU DECIDE TO POSTPONE BERGALL VISIT FOR BRIEF PERIOD.

PROS

--IF BERGALL VISIT SHOULD COINCIDE WITH FINAL DEPARTURE OF MADRID'S AUTHORITY FROM SPANISH SAHARA, SHIP'S PRESENCE COULD BE WIDELY CONSTRUED AND POSSIBLY PUBLICIZED BY BOTH MOROCCO AND ALGERIA AS EVIDENCE OF U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT FOR RABAT'S POLICIES IN SPANISH SAHARA.

--WE DO NOT WANT TO INTERNATIONALIZE SAHARA ISSUE, AND IF WE SEND NPW IN NOW THIS MIGHT COUNTER OUR POLICY OF KEEPING IT REGIONAL ISSUE AND AVOIDING OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. IT MIGHT ALSO LEAVE US OPEN TO LATER ACCUSATIONS THAT WE TOOK
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FIRST STEPS TOWARD INTERNATIONALIZATION OF PROBLEM.

--ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVE THUS FAR FOR SUCH ACTION, ALGERIA OR ANOTHER COUNTRY MIGHT CALL FOR MEETING OF SECURITY COUNCIL ON SAHARA QUESTION TO COINCIDE WITH END OF SPANISH ADMINISTRATION FEBRUARY 28. A HIGHLY PUBLICIZED U.S. NAVY VISIT AT THAT TIME WOULD LEND ITSELF TO PROPAGANDA EXPLOITATION THAT WE WERE SEEKING

TO INFLUENCE UN DELIBERATIONS AND INJECTING SUPERPOWER
POLITICS INTO REGIONAL DISPUTE.

--EVEN IF THERE IS NO SC MEETING, UN AND OTHER DIPLOMATIC
EFFORTS IN TRAIN MAY STILL BE UNDERWAY IN LATE FEBRUARY.
U.S. NAVAL VISIT MIGHT BE SEEN AS ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE
THESE EFFORTS. VISIT MIGHT ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECT

MEDIATION EFFORTS OF EGYPTIANS AND OTHER MODERATE ARABS,
OR BE PERCEIVED BY THEM AS EMBARRASSMENT TO THEIR
ENDEAVORS.

--RECENT EVENTS IN SAHARA APPEAR TO SUGGEST THAT ALGERIANS
MAY HAVE ACQUIESCED, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, IN THE MOROCCAN
OCCUPATION AND ARE LOOKING FOR A FACE-SAVING WAY OUT OF
THE CORNER THEY HAVE PAINTED THEMSELVES INTO. ALGIERS
COULD INTERPRET U.S. NPW VISIT AT SUCH A SENSITIVE TIME
AS PUBLIC CHALLENGE, A FLAUNTING OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR
MOROCCO WHICH COULD NOT GO UNANSWERED. BOUMEDIENNE IS
BITTER ABOUT OUR ROLE IN THE SAHARA DISPUTE AS HE SEES IT,
AND A U.S. NAVAL VISIT TO MOROCCO COULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFI-
CULT TO MAINTAIN A U.S.-ALGERIAN DIALOGUE, WHICH REMAINS
IMPORTANT TO OUR LONG RUN INTERESTS DESPITE ALGERIA'S
OPPOSITION TO US ON A BROAD RANGE OF MULTILATERAL ISSUES.

--MORE IMMEDIATELY, THE BERGALL VISIT WOULD COINCIDE WITH
AND POSSIBLY CAST A SHADOW OVER CHUCK ROBINSON'S VISIT TO
ALGERIA.

--WE ARE NOT SUGGESTING THAT THE VISIT BE CANCELLED BUT
MERELY POSTPONED UNTIL THE NEXT DATE WHICH THE NAVY
FINDS SUITABLE FOR ANOTHER NUCLEAR SUBMARINE.

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CONS

--USE OF MOROCCAN PORTS BY U.S. NPW'S IS OF GREAT
IMPORTANT TO OUR REGIONAL INTERESTS AS AT PRESENT ONLY
ITALY, AND TO LESSER EXTENT TUNISIA, OF ALL MEDITERRANEAN
BASIN COUNTRIES, WILL PERMIT CALLS BY U.S. ATOMIC-
POWERED WARSHIPS, MR. CLEMENTS, IN PARTICULAR, FEELS
STRONGLY THAT VISIT SHOULD NOT BE POSTPONED.

--AS MOROCCANS HAVE REQUESTED NPW VISIT ASAP, POSTPONE-
MENT FOR WHATEVER REASON, AND PARTICULARLY AFTER MOROCCO
HAS ALREADY AGREED OFFICIALLY TO PROPOSED DATES, WOULD
INEVITABLY EXCITE MOROCCAN CONCERNS AND COULD POSSIBLY
RESULT IN WITHDRAWAL OF PERMISSION FOR FUTURE NPW CALLS.

--EVEN IF WE DISGUISED TRUE REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT IN OUR EXPLANATION TO GOM, MOROCCANS WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS OF OUR REAL MOTIVES AND QUESTION OUR TRUE INTENTIONS TOWARD THEM.

--IN YOUR JANUARY 29 MEETING WITH KING'S EMISSARY KARIM LAMRANI, YOU PROMISED TO THINK OF WAY S TO DEMONSTRATE OUR DIPLOMATIC AND NATIONAL INTEREST TOWARD MOROCCO.

IT MAY BE THAT BERGALL VISIT WOULD CONSTITUTE JUST SUCH A DEMONSTRATION.

--U.S. GESTURE IN SUPPORT OF MOROCCO AT THIS STAGE MIGHT BE WELCOMED BY SOME THIRD WORLD FRIENDS--E.G., IRAN-- PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THEIR CONCERN OVER SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN ANGOLA.

--WHILE TIMING OF BERGALL'S VISIT IS INDEED AWKWARD, THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE SAHARA REMAINS UNCERTAIN AND THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT SITUATION WOULD NOT BE WORSE BY TIME CHOSEN FOR POSTPONED NPW VISIT.

--ALTHOUGH WE MAY BE ABLE TO ACCELERATE DELIVERIES OR ARRANGE FOR THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFER OF SOME MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO MOROCCO, TOTAL PACKAGE WILL NOT BE IMPRESSIVE. THOUGH MORE SYMBOLIC THAN REAL, NPW CALL COMING SOON
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AFTER PORT VISIT OF SIXTH FLEET COMMANDER AND HIS FLAGSHIP MIGHT GO FAR TO REASSURE KING HASSAN, WHO HAS LENT US NEEDED SUPPORT ON MIDDLE EAST QUESTION AND UN ISSUES (ALTHOUGH MOROCCO HAS NOW RECOGNIZED THE MPLA).
OPTION 2

THAT WE MAKE NO OBJECTION TO VISIT AND ALLOW IT TO PROCEED ON SCHEDULE. (ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST ARE OBVERSE OF THOSE ABOVE.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT YOU AUTHORIZE MR. SISCO TO CALL MR. CLEMENTS AND INFORM HIM THAT, FOR REASONS CITED ABOVE, DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS IT NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO PROCEED WITH NPW VISIT AS SCHEDULED AND ASK THAT VISIT BE POSTPONED FOR BRIEF PERIOD.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

ALTERNATIVELY,

THAT WE NOT INTERVENE WITH DOD AND ALLOW VISIT TO PROCEED
AS PLANNED.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

SUB-OPTIONS

1. IF YOU DECIDE BERGALL VISIT SHOULD TAKE PLACE AS
SCHEDULED, THAT WE NOTIFY EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, ALGERIA
AND SYRIA IN ADVANCE TO DEFUSE TO EXTENT POSSIBLE ANY

POTENTIAL ADVERSE REACTION.

PROS

--DESPITE LACK OF TOTAL SUCCESS, ONGOING ARAB MEDIATION
EFFORTS OFFER BEST HOPE OF SETTLING SAHARA DISPUTE ON
REGIONAL BASIS. IN ABSENCE OF ADVANCE NOTIFICATION,
ARABS COULD PERCEIVE NPW VISIT AS U.S. ATTEMPT TO INTER-
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FERE OR UNDERCUT THEIR ENDEAVORS.

--ON OTHER HAND, SOME ARAB MEDIATORS MAY WELCOME BERGALL
CALL AS EVIDENCE OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR MOROCCO AND INTENSIFY
THEIR ACTIVITIES WHICH STEM FROM THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS'
PRO-MOROCCAN POSITIONS.

--IF ARABS OBJECT TO NPW VISIT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO
LEARN THIS IN ADVANCE SO THAT THEIR VIEWS COULD BE
CONSIDERED PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF BERGALL IN SAFI.

--ARABS WILL APPRECIATE ADVANCE NOTIFICATION AS PROOF OF
CONTINUING U.S. INTENTION TO COOPERATE WITH THEM IN
MATTERS OF MUTUAL REGIONAL INTEREST.

CONS

--IF ARABS OBJECT TO BERGALL VISIT, WE WOULD BE FACED WITH
DILEMMA OF EITHER GOING AHEAD ANYWAY OVER THEIR OBJECTIONS,
WITH ADDED STRAINS ON OUR RELATIONS, OR POSTPONING VISIT
OUT OF DEFERENCE TO THEM, WHICH COULD ANGER MOROCCO.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IF YOU DECIDE THAT BERGALL SHOULD CALL AT SAFI AS PLANNED,
THAT YOU AUTHORIZE ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF EGYPT, SAUDI
ARABIA AND SYRIA, IN LIGHT OF THEIR MEDIATION EFFORTS,
AND ALGERIA TO PUT VISIT IN PERSPECTIVE TO THE EXTENT
POSSIBLE.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

ALTERNATIVELY,

THAT WE DO NOT NOTIFY THE ARAB MEDIATORS PRIOR TO THE NPW
VISIT.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

DRAFTED: NEA - ESCUDERO;CLEARED: NEA - MR. ATHERTON INGERSOLL

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